

# MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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***\*\*ADVISORY – Important Information\*\****

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**2009PHADV018**

TO: All Maine Health Alert Network Recipients

FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director

SUBJECT: **Updated Guidance from Maine CDC for Laboratory Testing of Persons with Suspected Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus**

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)  
(Formerly Bureau of Health)

## **Updated Guidance from Maine CDC for Laboratory Testing of Persons with Suspected Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus – May 6, 2009**

Maine CDC issues the following updated guidance on laboratory testing of persons with suspected novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. These guidelines are current as of May 6, 2009.

Maine is now considered an affected area. On 5/4/09, one case patient was confirmed as novel influenza A (H1N1) by Federal CDC. At this time, Maine CDC is maintaining case finding activities to better understand the spread of this virus across the state.

- Health care partners, including laboratories and clinicians, should continue to evaluate patients for influenza-like illness (ILI), defined as
  - Fever of 100° F or greater; and
  - Cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.
- Patients with influenza-like illness should be instructed to stay home for 7 days after illness onset or at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer.
- Patients who test negative for influenza by RT-PCR do not need to remain at home and can resume normal activity once asymptomatic.
- Health care providers may choose to submit clinical specimens for influenza testing at the Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) for patients with ILI. Specimens may be submitted through routine courier systems available at clinical hospital laboratories. Reports of this nature do not need to be called to the Maine CDC Disease Reporting Line; alternatively providers may fax reports to 207-287-8186.
- Maine CDC would like to receive reports at the 24/7 Disease Reporting Line (1-800-821-5821) of patients with ILI requiring hospitalization. Laboratory testing at HETL is recommended. Epidemiologists can assist with courier transportation if needed (e.g. routine courier service would result in significant delay in specimen submission).
- Probable cases of novel influenza A H1N1 identified by Maine CDC will be investigated immediately and the submitting provider will be notified.
- At this time, HETL is faxing all other laboratory results to the submitting facility.